

ARCHAEOLOGY & MICROSCOPY. RECENT CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ANALYSIS OF ARTEFACTS MADE FROM ANIMAL SKELETAL RAW MATERIALS

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ORAL PRESENTATION

The paper offers some synthesis data regarding recent microscopic analysis of archaeological artefacts made of osseous raw materials (bone, deer antler, teeth, shells etc.) dated from various epoch (Neolithic – Early Middle Ages, about 6000 BC-1300 AD) discovered within 14 sites from Romania.

The assemblage comprises more than 300 artefacts included in large morpho-typological categories as: tools, weapons, adornments, pieces from cultic inventories etc.

Applying a unitary methodology aims at highlighting the paleotechnological specificity (manufacture and use), the constant aspects, but also the innovations that appeared in time.

The analysis offers a unique *panopticum* from a close-up perspective of the always present and spectacular phenomenon of processing animal skeletal raw materials and related to various aspects of evolution of ancient human communities from the territory of Romania.

Site	Age					
	Neolithic	Copper Age	Bronze Age	Second Iron Age	Roman Period	Middle Ages
Ardeu, Hunedoara County						
Berești, Galați County						
Blandiana, Alba County						
Fântânele, Bistrița-Năsăud County						
Isaccea/Noviodunum, Tulcea County						
Jucu, Cluj County						
Luduș, Mureș County						
Negrilești, Galați County						
Păuleni, Harghita County						
Reșca/Romula, Olt County						
Stoicani, Galați County						
Suceveni, Galați County						
Turdaș, Hunedoara County						
Uroi, Hunedoara County						

**PREHISTORIC SYMBOLIC ARTEFACTS – A CLOSE-UP VIEW.
BRONZE AGE DECORATED RED DEER ANTLER PLATE
DISCOVERED IN TRANSYLVANIA, ROMANIA**

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POSTER SESSION

The poster presents the data issued from the analysis regarding a unique symbolic artefact made of red deer antler discovered in the archaeological site of Șoimeni – “*Dâmbul Cetății*”, Păuleni-Ciuc Commune, Harghita County, Romania.

The object was recovered during the 2000 excavation campaign from a Wietenberg Culture complex (Hut 7).

The study was done using a unitary methodology (Beldiman 2007) which takes into account all quantifiable data. Systematic microscopic examination of the piece has been performed; photos taken (general views, detailed views, and microscopic views) were added to the previous image database.

A special attention was drawn to technological aspects (manufacturing, traces of use) that have been studied and defined on the basis of data issued from microscopic analyses. There are attested some specific procedures as fracturing, splitting, abrasion, chopping, grooving.

The artefact: Fragment of a decorated plate. Dimensions: length 35 mm; initial diameter cca 50 mm. Red deer antler. Triangular fragment. Probably circular plate made from a red deer antler beam fragment (*compacta* tissue). Black uniform colour resulted by burning. The ornamentation consists in two parallel grooves, made probably with a metal blade.

The possible manufacturing chain includes several stages: extraction, shaping, drawing the ornamentation (circle). The piece seems to have been intentionally broken and coloured probably by intentional burning.

This is a type of artefact which had not been found in other systematically studied Bronze Age sites and assemblages from Transylvania or other regions of Romania. This belongs to the Middle/Late Phase of the Bronze Age in Romania, Wietenberg Culture (Middle Phase, II; cca 1800 – 1600 BC).

We have here a rare/unique red deer antler plate that have been attested for the first time in this site and are rarely present in the area of Wietenberg Culture.

The analysis offers new chrono-cultural, typological and paleotechnological markers for complex and extensive analysis of symbolic behaviour of Bronze Age communities from Transylvania region.